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The French delegates insisted upon dividing the passengers into isolated groups, so that each group might be released separately at the expiration of five days from the occurrence of the last case. Other delegates objected to any detention for a longer period than is necessary for the thorough disinfection of the vessel and the personal effects of the passengers. This modified system of quarantine, or 'medical inspection,' if well executed, and with the application of approved methods of disinfection, would doubtless afford the greatest possible security with the least possible interference with commerce, and injustice to individuals; whereas the old-fashioned quarantine is regarded by the more enlightened nations of Europe as untrustworthy and barbarous. Dr. Koch, the discoverer of the 'comma bacillus,' was in favor of the system of medical inspection as above defined.

It would be out of place in the present paper to give more in detail the conclusions reached by the conference with reference to sanitary regulations to be adopted at the port of departure, at sea, and at the port of arrival, the special measures recommended for the Red Sea and Suez Canal, the directions for disinfection, etc. But, as showing in outline the general sentiment of the delegates with reference to the most important preventive measures, we may quote the following proposition, which was introduced on the last day of the session by the delegate from the United States, and was adopted with but a single negative vote (Turkey).

"The measures recommended against cholera are, in general, applicable to yellow-fever, and to other diseases which prevail in epidemic form under the influence of bad sanitary conditions, and which are transmitted by human intercourse.

"The most effectual means for preventing the propagation of diseases of this class are: The sanitary improvement (*assainissement*) of seaport towns, and of vessels sailing from infected ports; isolation of the sick; and disinfection of infected or suspected articles and localities."

Baltimore, July 30. GEO. M. STERNBERG.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

\*.\* Correspondents are requested to be as brief as possible. The writer's name is in all cases required as proof of good faith.

### An abnormal Rudbeckia.

An interesting specimen of *Rudbeckia hirta*, L., was recently found among a patch of plants by my brother, Mr. Davis L. James. It differs from the normal type in such a manner as to deserve notice. It had the ordinary form, with the black conical centre. There were thirteen yellow rays. Two of these were of the usual shape, ligulate, with notches at the end; three were tubular, and with five lobes; and the remainder split open near the end, and the ray spread out. All the rays were fertile, although the generic character is 'rays neutral' (Gray, 'Manual,' p. 254). There can be no doubt as to the species, as it is a very common and familiar plant in this neighborhood. The sketch shows the appearance of the flower. It seems almost like an intermediate stage between the typical composite and a blossom with a number of large tubular flowers in a head. Can it be a reversion to some ancestral form?



Cincinnati, O.

JOSEPH F. JAMES.

### The ginkgo tree.

Some years ago I received fruit from the Ginkgo (*Salisburia adiantifolia*) from Tennessee, and since then I have heard of a number of cases. My impression is, that, in the latitude of southern Pennsylvania and Virginia, it is rather common for this exotic to fruit.

New Haven, Conn., July 28.

WM. H. BREWER.

### The swimming-habits of the sunfish.

The accompanying figure may at first puzzle the reader, but a little explanation will make it comprehensible. It is a view of the sunfish, or Mola, as seen from the back, the beholder looking down upon the animal from above as it swims in its own peculiar way. The individual from which this sketch was taken was caught in a trap-net at Quisset Harbor, Mass., and afterwards towed in a strong bag-net with a steam-launch from Quisset to Wood's Holl, where it was placed in one of the large pools constructed south of the laboratory for the Fish commission under the direction of Professor Baird. The fish measures about five feet in length and three in width: in fact, it may be considered adult. Since its removal to its new home, the animal seems quite contented, and has afforded an unusual opportunity to observe the manner in which its fins are used. The manner in which these organs are moved is so peculiar that it has been thought advisable to give a brief account of the means by which they are made effective as locomotive organs.

One does not need to watch this fish long in its